



IN REPLY TO:

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Montana State Office

5001 Southgate Drive, P.O. Box 36800

Billings, Montana 59107-6800

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/>



1600/9210 (923)

August 2001

Dear Reader:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Montana/Dakotas Fire Management Plan NEPA Analysis is enclosed for your review and comment.

The 2000 fire season provided an unfortunate but ultimately valuable insight into the shortcomings of past fire management practices. In response to that increasing awareness, this document evaluates historical trends in managing and responding to fire on public lands, and analyzes the potential effects of new guidance under Alternative B (Proposed Management). The Proposed Management alternative constitutes a shift from previous management practices, especially concerning fuels management and immediate and unconditional wildland fire suppression. Greater emphasis would be placed on prescribed burning and other techniques to reduce hazardous fuels. If Alternative B is adopted, existing Resource Management Plans (RMPs) and one Management Framework Plan (MFP) may be amended as necessary.

Additional copies are available for review at each of the BLM Field Offices in Billings, Butte, Dillon, Glasgow, Great Falls, Havre, Lewistown, Malta, Miles City, Missoula, Dickinson, and Belle Fourche.

You may submit comments directly to the BLM state office for consideration by September 17, 2001. Please address your letters to:

John Thompson
Bureau of Land Management - Montana State Office
PO Box 36800
Billings, MT 59107-6800

After considering public input and making necessary revisions, BLM will issue a decision and approve all parts of the plans that are not being protested.

You may protest the proposed plan amendments if you believe that you or your interests will be negatively affected by the proposed management, and if: 1) you can document that you have participated in the planning process and 2) the issue(s) that you wish to protest were submitted for the record during the planning process. The protest period will also close on September 17, 2001.

Protest letters should include:

1. The name, mailing address, phone number, and interest of the person filing the protest;
2. A statement of the issue or issues being protested;
3. A statement of the part or parts of the plan amendment being protested;
4. A copy of all documents addressing the issue or issues that were submitted during the planning process by the protesting party or an indication of the date the issue or issues were discussed for the

- record; and
5. A concise statement of why the proposed decision is believed to be incorrect. This is a critical part of your protest. Take care to document all relevant facts. As much as possible, reference or cite the planning documents, environmental analysis documents, available planning records (i.e. meeting minutes or summaries, correspondence, etc.). A protest which merely expresses disagreement with the proposed decision without providing any data will not provide us with the benefit of your information and insight. In this case, the Director's review would be based on existing analysis and existing supporting data.

Protest letters should be addressed to:

Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management
Mail Stop 1075LS, 1849 C Street NW
Attention: Ms. Brenda Williams, Protest Coordinator
Washington, D.C. 20240

Thank you for your continuing interest and participation in the planning process. If you have any questions, please direct them to John Thompson at the Montana State Office at (406)896-5030.

Sincerely,

/s/ Roberta A. Moltzen

Roberta A. Moltzen
Acting State Director



United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Montana State Office

August 2001



**FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN/PLAN AMENDMENT
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
For
MONTANA AND THE DAKOTAS**

The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for the stewardship of our public lands. It is committed to manage, protect, and improve these lands in a manner to serve the needs of the American people for all times. Management is based on the principles of multiple use and sustained yield of our nation's resources within a framework of environmental responsibility and scientific technology. These resources include recreation; rangelands; timber; minerals; watershed; fish and wildlife; wilderness; air; and scenic, scientific, and cultural values.

BLM/MT/PL-01/008

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN/PLAN AMENDMENT
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

FOR

MONTANA AND THE DAKOTAS

Montana State Office
Billings, Montana

August 2001

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